

Claims

1. A method for improving activity in a pet, the method comprising administering to the pet a nutritional agent which promotes the growth of bifido- and lactic-bacteria in the gastro-intestinal tract of the pet.
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2. A method according to claim 1 in which the nutritional agent is a component of a nutritionally complete pet food.
- 10 3. A method according to claim 1 in which the nutritional agent is selected from the group of prebiotics and probiotic micro-organisms.
- 15 4. A method according to claim 3 in which the prebiotic is selected from the group of inulin, fructooligosaccharides and plant materials which contain inulin and/or fructooligosaccharides.
5. A method according to claim 1 in which the pet food further comprises a long chain fatty acid.
- 20 6. A method according to claim 1 in which the pet food further comprises a starch source selected from one or more of corn, rice, barley, and wheat.
- 25 7. A method for improving activity in an elderly pet, the method comprising administering to the pet a nutritionally complete pet food which contains a nutritional agent which promotes the growth of bifido- and lactic-bacteria in the gastro-intestinal tract of the pet.
8. A method according to claim 7 in which the nutritional agent is selected from the group of prebiotics and probiotic micro-organisms.
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9. A method according to claim 8 in which the prebiotic is selected from the group of inulin, fructooligosaccharides and plant materials which contain inulin and/or fructooligosaccharides.
- 35 10. A method according to claim 7 in which the pet food contains about 0.1% to about 5% by weight of a prebiotic as the nutritional agent.

11. A method according to Claim 7 in which the pet food contains about 10^4 to about 10^{10} cells of a probiotic micro-organism per gram of the pet food as the nutritional agent.
12. A method according to Claim 7 in which the pet food further comprises a
5 long chain fatty acid.
13. A method according to Claim 1 in which the pet food further comprises a starch source selected from one or more of corn, rice, barley, and wheat.
14. A method for improving activity in an elderly dog, the method comprising administering to the dog a nutritionally complete pet food which contains a nutritional
10 agent which promotes the growth of bifido- and lactic-bacteria in the gastro-intestinal tract of the dog.
15. A method for improving activity in an elderly dog, the method comprising administering to the dog a nutritionally complete pet food which contains a nutritional agent which promotes the growth of bifido- and lactic-bacteria in the gastro-intestinal tract
15 of the dog.
16. A method for ameliorating joint stiffness in a pet, the method comprising administering to the pet a nutritional agent which promotes the growth of bifido- and lactic-bacteria in the gastro-intestinal tract of the pet.
17. A method according to Claim 16 wherein the nutritional agent assists in
20 improving systemic inflammatory status in a pet.
18. A method according to Claim 17 wherein the nutritional agent assists in reducing concentrations of pathogenic bacteria known to contribute to an increased inflammatory status.
19. A method according to Claim 16 in which the pet is an elderly dog.
- 25 20. A method according to Claim 16 in which the pet is an elderly cat.

21. A method for improving activity in an elderly dog, the method comprising administering to the dog a nutritionally complete pet food which contains a prebiotic selected from the group of inulin, fructooligosaccharides and plant materials which contain inulin and/or fructooligosaccharides.

5 22. A method of providing a pet with more energy comprising administering to the pet a nutritional agent which promotes the growth of bifido- and lactic-bacteria in the gastro-intestinal tract of the pet.

23. A method of improving physical activity in an elderly pet comprising administering to the pet a pet food composition comprising about 1% chicory by weight.

10 24. A method of improving physical activity levels in an elderly pet comprising administering to the pet a pet food composition comprising at least about 1% chicory by weight as a source of inulin.

15 25. A method of increasing activity level in a pet of at least 5 years of age, comprising feeding the pet a balanced diet comprising a pet food formulation comprising inulin in an effective amount to reduce joint stiffness.

26. A method of returning a senior pet to a previous level of liveliness, comprising administering to the pet a pet food composition comprising inulin in an amount effective to increase physical activity in such pet.

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